

# STANDARDS COMMITTEE

## Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2014

**PRESENT:**                    **Independent Members**

Mr. Michael Wilson (Chair)  
Mr. Islwyn Jones (Vice-Chair)

Mrs. Denise Harris Edwards  
Mr. Leslie Lord  
Mrs. Dilys Shaw

**Representing Town and Community Councils**

Councillors William Raymond Evans and John Roberts

**IN ATTENDANCE:**        Head of Function (Council Business)/Monitoring Officer,  
Solicitor (Corporate Governance) (AP),  
Corporate Web Manager (PA) (Item 4),  
Audit Manager (JF) (Item 5),  
Senior HR Development Officer (MW) (Item 6),  
Committee Officer (MEH).

**APOLOGIES:**                Councillor Trefor Lloyd Hughes and Councillor Dafydd Rhys Thomas

Members expressed their deepest sympathy with Councillor Raymond Evans in the loss of his daughter recently.

**1        DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

No declaration of interest received.

**2        MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 March, 2014 were confirmed.

**ARISING THEREON**

2. (11) – The Solicitor (Corporate Governance) noted that the Clerk of the Holyhead Town Council has now responded that he will attend one of the training sessions afforded by the County Council.

**3        STANDARDS COMMITTEE FORUM**

Submitted and noted - the minutes of the Standards' Committee Forum held on 29 April, 2014.

The Chair gave a report on the issues raised at the Forum. It was noted that attendance at training sessions by Town and Community Councils seem to be a problem for each authority. The Members considered that Town and Community Councils should be encouraged to attend training sessions especially in relation to the Code of Conduct. Clerks of Town and Community Councils also seemed to be uneasy in taking the responsibility for advising their Members on the Code of Conduct.

The Head of Function (Council Business)/Monitoring Officer stated that she would approach One Voice Wales to ascertain if all Clerks of Town and Community Council have a job description. She also stated that the Clerks should be made aware that the County Council is available to give

guidance on any issue relating to the Code and that responsibility for abiding by the Code sits with the councillors.

**RESOLVED to note the report.**

**ACTION : To obtain standard job descriptions for Clerks and submit copy to the Chair.**

#### **4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MEETINGS AND REGISTER OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY**

Submitted – a report by the Corporate Web Manager in relation to the online publishing of Statutory Registers.

The Corporate Web Manager reported that no Gifts and Hospitality declaration has been completed by Members since the last meeting. She further reported on the additional software that is required to allow Members to input their own declarations of interest in meetings. The development of this software would cost £7,500 +vat to the authority. A period of testing and training would be required and it was anticipated that this new functionality would take up to three months to develop and implement.

**RESOLVED to accept the report and support the initiative.**

**ACTION : The Corporate Web Manager will draft a report, with the support of the Standards Committee, to request funding for the software for Members to be able to electronically input their own declarations of interests at meetings.**

#### **5 COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT PROJECT - AUDIT REVIEW**

Submitted – a report from the Audit Manager in respect of an audit of the Corporate Complaints Procedure which was undertaken as part of the approved Internal Audit Periodic Plan for 2014/15 following a request from the Standards Committee.

The Audit Manager noted that 62 complaints had been processed through to completion between April 2013 to March 2014. These complaints exclude Social Services and Schools which are recorded separately. He stated that the review found that there were adequate procedures in place to ensure compliance. However, two weaknesses identified related to the training of staff in relation to the Concerns and Complaints Policy and the production of an Annual Report to provide an analysis of complaint patterns and lessons to be learnt from previous years.

The Head of Function (Council Business)/Monitoring Officer reported that she has met with the Corporate Complaints Officer and it has been agreed that she would meet with the Service Complaints Officers to produce the outstanding Report and then devise training.

**RESOLVED to accept the report.**

**ACTION : That Members of the Standards Committee be afforded the report of the Corporate Complaints Officer in respect of the above, together with the training plan.**

#### **6 PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

Submitted – a verbal report by the Senior HR Development Officer on the current Performance Development Review process for Elected Members and referred to the proforma documents.

The Officer referred to the Performance Development Reviews that the Members of the Standards Committee will need to complete. It was suggested that the Chair/Vice-Chair would perform the role of reviewer. The purpose of such reviews will identify the skills and training needs required to support the role of a Member of the Standards Committee. It was stressed that these reviews should be completed by October. All jds now signed off.

**RESOLVED to note the report.**

**ACTION : The Senior HR Development Officer and the Solicitor (Corporate Governance) to make arrangement for Performance Development Reviews to be undertaken for the Members of the Standards Committee to ensure paperwork completed and any development identified.**

## **7 CONDUCT COMPLAINTS TO THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES**

**7A** Submitted – a report by the Solicitor (Corporate Governance) in the form of an up-dated matrix for County Councillors.

**RESOLVED to note the contents of the report for information.**

**ACTION : An update report on any further developments from the Solicitor (Corporate Governance) at the next Standards Committee.**

**7B** Submitted – a report by the Solicitor (Corporate Governance) in the form of an up-dated matrix for Town and Community Councils.

**RESOLVED to note the contents of the report for information.**

**ACTION : An update report on any further developments from the Solicitor (Corporate Governance) at the next Standards Committee.**

## **8 ADJUDICATION PANEL DECISIONS**

**8A** Submitted – a summary of decisions presented by the Solicitor (Corporate Governance) which were made by the Adjudication Panel between 12 March, 2014 and 10 June, 2014.

The Solicitor (Corporate Governance) gave a brief background report on a decision made in respect of a case in Llandrindod Wells Town Council.

**RESOLVED to note the report for information.**

**ACTION : An update or any further developments from the Solicitor (Corporate Governance) at the next Standards Committee, and notify Members including Community Councils where appropriate.**

**8B** Submitted – a summary of the Adjudication Panel for Wales' Annual Report from the Solicitor (Corporate Governance).

**RESOLVED to note the report for information.**

**ACTION : An update or any further developments from the Solicitor (Corporate Governance) at the next Standards Committee, and notify Members including Community Councils where appropriate.**

## **9 TRAINING FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS**

**9A** Submitted – a report by Solicitor (Corporate Governance) on the responses received to the letters sent on attendance at training sessions presented by One Voice Wales.

The Officer stated that Clerks to Town and Community Councils need to be encouraged to ask for guidance from the County Council. It was noted that the Head of Function (Council Business)/Monitoring Officer and the Solicitor (Corporate Governance) are willing to try to build a closer working relationship with the Clerks in respect of issues pertaining to the Code of Conduct.

**RESOLVED to accept the report.**

**ACTION : That the Solicitor (Corporate Governance) to approach the Clerks of Town and Community Councils to encourage them to attend the training sessions and to make**

**them aware that the she and the Head of Function (Council Business)/Monitoring Officer are available to give guidance when required.**

- 9B** Submitted – a report by the Solicitor (Corporate Governance) on the training which is to be presented by Mr. Peter Keith Lucas on the 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2014.

The Officer requested that if any Member of the Standards Committee wishes to raise any additional topics at the training session they should forward their requests to her in due course.

**RESOLVED to note the report.**

**ACTION : The Solicitor (Corporate Governance) to report back to the next Standards Committee on the training given.**

## **10 CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair stated that he had presented his Annual Report and Work Programme to the full Council on 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2014. He noted that he had reiterated that the main focus of Standards Committee to maintain standards within the Council and to afford the Clerks Town and Community Councils training opportunities on the Code of Conduct.

**RESOLVED to note the report.**

**ACTION : None**

The meeting concluded at 4.00 p.m.

**MR. MICHAEL WILSON  
CHAIR**